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**NAVAL
POSTGRADUATE
SCHOOL**

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**THE FEDERAL ROLE IN THE SECURITY OF RELIGIOUS
VENUES IN AMERICA**

by

Michael L. Crockett

March 2006

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

David Brannan
Christopher Bellavita

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Increasing Islamic extremist terrorist attacks against primarily Christian worship sites in the Middle East and Southeast Asia pose disturbing questions: Could terrorists attack places of worship or a religious icon in America, what security policies are currently in effect, and what would be the impact on the American People? This paper explores the potential consequences of neglecting the security of religious venues in America and how it could have strategic ramifications if ignored. Could a successful and highly visible terrorist attack on an American worship site have such an effect on the American Public that it could drastically alter the war on terror, re-draw battle lines by faith, and launch a modern day Crusades? What role does the federal government currently have in defending America's religious venues against the threat of an Islamic extremist terrorist attack? Are current security efforts adequate, and if not, what policies or new approach should be taken? The author ultimately proposes a federally-led layered security engagement strategy model for religious venues. This model utilizes an incentive-based federal resourcing approach to facilitate achieving optimal security while still preserving America's core social tenet of protecting and ensuring the religious freedoms of its citizenry from religiously-motivated Islamist terrorism.

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**THE FEDERAL ROLE IN THE SECURITY OF RELIGIOUS VENUES IN
AMERICA**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

Increasing Islamic extremist terrorist attacks against primarily Christian worship sites in the Middle East and Southeast Asia pose disturbing questions: Could terrorists attack places of worship or a religious icon in America, what security policies are currently in effect, and what would be the impact on the American People? This paper explores the potential consequences of neglecting the security of religious venues in America and how it could have strategic ramifications if ignored. Could a successful and highly visible terrorist attack on an American worship site have such an effect on the American Public that it could drastically alter the war on terror, re-draw battle lines by faith, and launch a modern day Crusades? What role does the federal government currently have in defending America's religious venues against the threat of an Islamic extremist terrorist attack? Are current security efforts adequate, and if not, what policies or new approach should be taken? The author ultimately proposes a federally-led layered security engagement strategy model for religious venues. This model utilizes an incentive-based federal resourcing approach to facilitate achieving optimal security while still preserving America's core social tenet of protecting and ensuring the religious freedoms of its citizenry from religiously-motivated Islamist terrorism.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This war is fundamentally religious. Under no circumstances should we forget this enmity between us and the infidels. For, the enmity is based on creed.

~ Speech by Osama Bin Laden, Al-Jazeera Satellite Channel Television,
November 3, 2001.

Just three days removed from these events, Americans do not yet have the distance of history. But our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil.

~ U.S. President George W. Bush's remarks at The National Day of Prayer and Remembrance, National Cathedral, Washington D.C., September 14, 2001.

A. PURPOSE

The increasing number of Islamic extremist terrorist attacks against primarily Christian worship sites in the Middle East and Southeast Asia pose disturbing questions: How easy would it be for terrorists to attack a place of worship in America, what security policies are currently in effect, and what would be the impact on the American People if a terrorist attack like this were to happen in the United States?

This paper explores the potential consequences of neglecting the security of religious sites and events in America and how a lack of security at home or overseas could have strategic ramifications if ignored. Could a successful and highly visible terrorist attack on a worship site in the United States have such a negative effect on the American Public that it could drastically alter the overall global war on terror, re-draw battle lines based on religion, and even launch a modern day version of the Crusades?

The U.S. Federal government currently exercises no routine oversight in the security of religious venues in America. For the purposes of this research, religious venues include places of worship, public religious gatherings, major televised worship services, or appearances by well-known or prominent religious leaders whether of American or foreign nationality. Possible explanations for this lack of federal oversight include: Constitutional First Amendment concerns regarding the country's often

controversial separation of Church and State, its potential as a political powder keg, and the fact that most religious gatherings occur within local jurisdictions.

There are a few exceptions to the lack of direct federal oversight. If the President is in attendance (e.g., services at the National Cathedral) or a religious leader is visiting America (e.g., the Pope), the United States Secret Service is the designated lead federal agency in charge of security. In the Pope's case, however, his security is provided by the Secret Service primarily because he is technically a head of state.¹

The current global war on terror, like the terrorist attacks of 9/11, has changed the commonly perceived landscape of public safety and security. Today, religious security may be viewed through a new lens while balancing the need for security with religious freedom.

On television broadcasts from Al Jazeera, Muslim countries view America as being pro-Israel, a country eager to wage war against Arab nations, and a nation that deploys armed Crusaders into their holy land. The U.S. military strengthened that image after military personnel were photographed disgracing Muslim prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison and U.S. Marines were videotaped killing a wounded Muslim insurgent inside a Baghdad mosque.²

This research will try to determine if a threat to America's religious venues exists and whether or not there is a legitimate need for federal involvement with domestic religious security. Other aspects of religious security will be explored, including the threat of Islamic extremism, potential targeting methods, and a review of existing literature surrounding governmental involvement with religious security.

America's religious venues may be targeted by Islamic extremists. A number of factors may contribute to this potential vulnerability, among them: the increasingly popular and rapid spread of Islam, America's ongoing war on terror, and the American-

¹ www.secretservice.gov. (accessed March 9, 2006) The Secret Service is designated as the lead federal agency for a Papal visit primarily because of the Pope's status as a head of state of The Vatican.

² "Falluja Mosque Marine Escapes Charge." AlJazeera.net. February 24, 2005. <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/5C41ABE7-A613-47D1-AB91-C5298491BBFA.htm> (accessed February 11, 2006) or "Iraqi's Killing by Marine Dominates Arab Media." MSNBC. November 17, 2004. <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/6514451/> (accessed February 11, 2006). Both links reveal how the Arab media gave substantial air time and attention to the shooting.

led occupation of Iraq. Are religious landmarks in America (and, to an extent, the world) soft targets for Islamic militant terrorism and could their destruction create a lever of influence that could transform the West's current war on terror into a modern day Crusade?

B. THESIS STATEMENT

What role does the federal government currently have in defending America's religious venues against the threat of an Islamic extremist terrorist attack, are current efforts adequate, and if not, what policies or new approach should be taken to cover this possible seam in U.S. homeland security?

C. METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted as a qualitative strategic assessment of the threat of Islamic extremism to America's religious venues and the U.S. federal government's role in their protection. To that end, this research assesses current federal legislation and policies towards governmental involvement in religious security affairs before making recommendations for federal strategy and future research.

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II. TARGETING RELIGION IN AMERICA

...there is still an enemy out there which hates America. They hate us because of what we love. We love freedom. We love the fact that people can worship an almighty God any way they see fit here in America.

- President George W. Bush speaking to Congress, September 28, 2002

A. BACKGROUND

In 1291 the medieval Crusades came to a bloody close, leaving millions of people dead from a prolonged war where fighters had faced-off against each other based solely on religious preference. According to Harvard Professor and renowned author Samuel P. Huntington, in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Making of World Order*, the groundwork for future conflict was laid centuries ago:

Conflict was, on the one hand, a product of difference, particularly the Muslim concept of Islam as a way of life transcending and uniting religion and politics versus the Western Christian concept of the separate realms of God and Caesar.³

The struggle between Islam and the West continues to be played out today in the jungles of Southeast Asia, the mountains of Afghanistan, the dusty streets of Baghdad, and the skyline of Manhattan. Huntington's point remains relevant still, as manifested in the domestic physical security of religious sites, events, or leaders – America's separation of church and state. There exists a significant paradox: in the United States, federal, state, and local governments cannot mandate control and protection over one of the nation's most prized civil liberties – freedom of religion.

Individual religious leaders have long been the target of assassins. A small group of terrorists or a lone actor could also elect to target individual religious leaders. In Delhi, India in 1948, perhaps the world's best known religious leader was assassinated for his political stance on a religious issue. Mahatma Gandhi was shot to death by a fellow

³ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 1st ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 210.

Hindu who was enraged that Gandhi desired to give Muslims equal rights.⁴ In 1968, America was the scene of the killing of another spiritual and political leader. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was gunned down by a lone shooter on a hotel balcony in Memphis, Tennessee. Although he wasn't killed for his religious beliefs, Dr. King's focus on civil rights had his personal faith and convictions as its foundation, and, like in Ghandi's case, led to his eventual demise at the hands of an assassin. In Chile in 1981, a Turkish man got close enough to the Pope's motorcade to shoot and almost kill Pope John Paul II. Although rumors of his affiliation with terrorist organizations were widespread, he was later determined to be simply deranged and was sentenced to prison until his release in January of 2006.

At times religion and politics have overlapped in the targeting of specific groups of individuals. In 1972, one of history's most notorious and televised terrorist actions transpired in front of millions of viewers when members of the PLO's Black September Organization (BSO) attacked the Olympic Village in Munich, Germany, eventually taking 11 Israeli athletes hostage before massacring them.⁵

In 1991, during Operation Desert Storm, Iraqi President Sadaam Hussein attempted to break the U.S.-led coalition by launching Scud Missiles against Israel, but failed in his attempt to divide the war into Christians and Jews versus Muslims. This was, arguably, the first precedent-setting effort to create a wartime schism in an attempt to redefine a war as one between faiths. Following the fall of the Hussein regime in Iraq, the American-led occupation and struggle against insurgents and jihad-seeking Mujahadeen continues.

As recently as November of 2004, religious intolerance boiled over into the arts with severe repercussions. In 2004 and after making a controversial film about the treatment of women in Islamic society, Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh died at the hands of a radical Muslim extremist who, after shooting the filmmaker, sliced his throat almost to the point of beheading and then used a knife to pin a letter of warning to Van Gogh's chest. Following the murder, mosques in many Dutch cities were targets of failed

⁴<http://www.mahatma.org.in/murderattempts/attempts.jsp?link=ld&id=1&cat=murderattempts> (accessed February 11, 2006) There were at least six assassination attempts prior to Mahatma Gandhi's murder.

⁵ "BBC History - Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948)." Available at www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/gandhi_mohandas.shtml (accessed February 29, 2006)

arson attempts and vandalism.⁶ This incident and the resultant Anti-Muslim attacks of retribution on Dutch mosques shed light on additional consequences that may result from a similar attack against an American religious venue. Terrorists could intentionally attack an American mosque and blame the carnage on the U.S. government or followers of one of the Western faiths in order to further their own agenda.

In August of 2005, a mentally unstable woman murdered a major religious figure in France. Nonagenarian “Brother Roger” Schultz, the founder of the 65 year old Taize Community (well known for its mixed Catholic and Protestant make-up) was stabbed three times in the throat in front of 2500 worshipers during a Taize service.⁷

Modern day revelations and attempts to heal interfaith relations have refreshed the world’s memory of the Crusades, directly linking Catholicism, arguably the most recognizable of Western faiths, as the millennia-old enemy of Islam, publicly linking religion directly with politics. In the year 2000, Pope John Paul II, offered an unprecedented apology to the Muslims of the world for the Catholic Church’s role in that dark chapter in Human history. The Catholic Church’s culpability was cemented with this admission of the Church’s transgression from the Pontiff himself: “For the role that each one of us has had, with his behavior, in these evils, contributing to a disfigurement of the face of the Church, we humbly ask forgiveness.”⁸ The religious website biblia.com provides further insight regarding the Pope’s apology: “The sins were not specifically enumerated. But when you boil them down they come to this – they are political acts by an institution of faith: the Crusades, The Inquisition, persecution of Jews, the forced conversions of Indians and Africans, acts to preserve the power and enrich the

⁶ “Van Gogh Murder Suspect in Court,” *BBC News*, April 13, 2005. <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4440347.stm> (accessed February 11, 2006).

Andrew Stuttaford, “How Enlightenment Dies,” *National Review Online*, November 12, 2004. <http://www.nationalreview.com/stuttaford/stuttaford200411120833.asp> (accessed February 11, 2006)

“Muslim Sites Attacked in Holland,” *English Al Jazeera News*, November 8, 2004. <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/4BC6FA72-4217-4F20-AEC8-B3B1E614CE85.htm> (accessed February 11, 2006). These links attest to the retaliatory effect of the Van Gogh murder and how had how Dutch mosques became the target of anti-Muslim retaliation.

⁷ Phillip Pullella, “Pope, Leaders Shocked by Murder of ‘Brother Roger,’ ” *Reuters* (August 17, 2005). <http://english.epochtimes.com/news/5-8-17/31347.html> (accessed February 11, 2006).

⁸ “The Crusades, the Inquisition...Apology of the Pope,” *Biblia.com*. <http://biblia.com/islam/crusades.htm> (accessed February 11, 2006)

Church, acts committed in Concert with Monarchs bound to the church by oath.”⁹ If indeed the Muslim faith has a thousand-year memory, it is a memory overwhelmed by Western atrocities that have been publicly acknowledged and renewed by modern-day religious leaders of non-Muslim faiths.

B. RELEVANCE

Why would a terrorist see American religion as a potential center of gravity worth targeting? The increasing frequency of religiously-motivated Islamic extremist terrorist attacks overseas may represent a potential harbinger of future attacks on religious targets in America. Acts of terrorism are occurring at or near worship sites around the world by Muslim extremists who are motivated by the same type of religious ideology that emboldened 19 suicidal extremists to hijack four airliners on 9/11.

Faith and terrorism are increasingly inseparable, and the evidence is alarming. There has been a significant and alarming trend recently, albeit overseas, of organized radical Islamic terrorists attacking Christian churches in Iraq, Pakistan, and Southeast Asia. A few examples: On October 28, 2001, six gunmen entered a church in Pakistan’s Punjab Province where 100 Christians were worshiping, killing 16 worshipers and a Muslim guard with small arms fire. No arrests were made.¹⁰ In 2002, thirty Palestinian militants took over the Church of the Nativity in Jerusalem, with hostages that included clergymen from three Christian denominations before they peacefully surrendered.¹¹ On Sunday, August 1, 2004 four Baghdad churches were attacked with car bombs, killing 11 people and injuring 47 others.¹²

Muslims worldwide also have reason to be outraged over American transgressions. The images of the prisoner abuse atrocities at Abu Gharib, when

⁹ “The Crusades, the Inquisition...Apology of the Pope.” *Biblia.com*. <http://biblia.com/islam/crusades.htm> (accessed February 11, 2006).

¹⁰ Scott Baldauf, “Pakistan Tightens Church Security,” *Christian Science Monitor* (October 29, 2001). <http://www.csmonitor.com/2001/1029/p6s1-wosc.html> (accessed February 11, 2006).

¹¹ C.J. Chivers, “Israel’s Threat of an Attack on a Church Is Pulled Back,” *New York Times* (April 27, 2002). <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F40610F93B5A0C748EDDAD0894DA404482> (accessed February 28, 2006)

¹² Pamela Constable, “Church Bombings Outrage Iraqis of All Faiths,” *Washington Post* (August 3, 2004, A01). <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A35361-2004Aug2.html> (accessed February 11, 2006).

juxtaposed with the video of a U.S. Marines shooting a wounded insurgent barricaded inside a mosque, could provide justification for an Islamic terrorist organization or a lone actor to target religious symbols of Western faith, in America or abroad.

Religion remains the primary motivation behind acts of terror by Islamic extremists. Terrorism specialist and author Bruce Hoffman has written, “The salience of religion as the major driving force behind international terrorism in the 1990s is further evidenced by the fact that the most serious terrorist acts of the decade—whether reckoned in terms of political implications and consequences or in the numbers of fatalities caused—have all had a significant religious dimension and/or motivation.”¹³

With the current American-led war on terror targeting primarily Islamic extremist groups, and the occupation of Iraq approaching its three year anniversary, America maintains its position as the world’s dominant hegemon and an increasingly popular target of Third World frustration. As Hoffman points out, “Moreover, as the only super-power, the United States may likely be blamed for more of the world’s ills—and therefore could be the focus of more terrorist attacks—than before.”¹⁴

To many in the Middle East, America is already seen as the Western leader of a modern Crusade against Islam, and therefore the most logical target for religiously-motivated terrorism. In his book, *Through Our Enemies’ Eyes*, the author “Anonymous” (who later disclosed his identity as career CIA Agent Michael Scheuer, author of *Imperial Hubris*), wrote of America’s most wanted terrorist, Osama Bin Laden, and his ideology of terrorism, contending that Osama bin Laden equates the Judeo-Christian alliance as anti-Islamic and therefore worthy of targeting through holy jihad:

Osama bin Laden is not constrained by America’s tenets of political correctness. He has asserted without doubt, vagueness, or qualification the superiority of Islam and Islamic life, and has described in detail his hatred for Jews and Christians because of their occupation of Islamic lands and sanctities, heretical beliefs or lack of religious belief, focus on money, and relentless persecution of Muslims.¹⁵

¹³ Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 92.

¹⁴ Bruce Hoffman, “Terrorist Targeting: Tactics, Trends, and Potentialities,” in *Technology and Terrorism* (London: Frank Cass, 1993), 12-29.

¹⁵ Anonymous. (Michael Scheuer), *Through Our Enemies’ Eyes – Osama Bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America* (Dulles, Virginia: Brassey’s Inc, 2003), 16.

While the U.S. military takes part in anti-terrorism operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Southeast Asia, America's domestic terrorist threat remains a serious concern. Since 9/11, America remains a prospective battleground for more religiously-motivated terrorism by Muslim extremists who call it the "Great Satan," home to dens of sin, while America's governmental leaders simultaneously communicate a public message of an America founded on faith and the value of religious freedom.

Terrorist organizations would logically consider a major successful domestic attack on America's faith, an enormous victory—perhaps even on the level of 9/11. If that assumption is true, the federal government should lead a centralized effort to protect America's religious venues from a domestic terrorist attack.

Since 9/11, the United States has gone to great lengths to fortify its defenses, increase deterrence measures, and heighten security awareness in many critical areas. Historical landmarks and critical infrastructure have received significant attention and funding, but when looking at the umbrella of homeland security as a whole, one important private sector of American society is conspicuously unprotected—religion. With America continuing to fight primarily Islamic militants, including insurgents in an occupied Iraq, and its continuing efforts to harden more critical infrastructure, the potential exists for an attack on a "soft" religious target within the United States.

Although a string of simultaneous attacks on major American religious landmarks or leaders has not occurred, attacks against symbolic religious sites overseas have become more common. Indeed, following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, a plan to attack the Vatican with a hijacked aircraft on Christmas Eve 2003 was disrupted.¹⁶ In 2001, the Taliban destroyed historic Buddhist statues in Afghanistan because they were considered symbols of idolatry and were simply not Muslim. Throughout 2004, radical Islamic extremist terrorists also attacked Christian churches in Pakistan and throughout Iraq.

Another reason religious venues may be targeted by terrorists is less obvious. A major televised or highly publicized attack on a religious venue in America could have a global secondary effect. An irrational actor might see an attack of this nature as a self-

¹⁶ Phillip Willan, "Italy's PM in Vatican air terror mystery," *Observer* (December 28, 2003), 1. <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/europe/story/0,11363,1113185,00.html> (accessed February 11, 2006)

fulfilling triggering mechanism to illicit a military response from the United States and the West. Their organization could then dictate events and terms reaping the same sort of sympathy among Muslims world-wide that the insurgency in Iraq is reaping among most Muslims in early 2006.

In 2004 George Bush was reelected on a campaign that, among other issues, centered and succeeded on the support of America's religious right. His campaign speeches repeatedly touched upon his personal faith and the faith of America's founding fathers, and it was that message, that public diplomacy, that was also broadcast around the world. It is feasible that terrorist organizations and the theocracies that back them perceive that claim as a source of power and in defiance of their version of Islam, making it worthy of Jihad in the form of assaults against symbols of Western faith.

Operation Iraqi Freedom and its subsequent transformation into a battle between the West and a significant insurgent/jihadist mix, may be enough, independently, to add American religious sites and leaders onto a list of high priority targets for Islamic terrorists.

The federal government, for its part, continues to be suspicious of America's Muslim population. In December of 2005, a *U.S. News and World Report* article informed the world that America continues to perceive Muslims as a potential threat to national security. The article disclosed that the federal government (the FBI specifically) was conducting active radiation detection monitoring on Muslims in the United States, including U.S. citizens and their places of worship.¹⁷ Shortly thereafter, a *New York Times* article disclosed that American citizens with suspected ties to terrorist organizations were having their phone conversations monitored via listening devices used by the National Security Agency (NSA).¹⁸ This acknowledgement, once again, indicated that the American Muslim population was the primary focus of the ongoing surveillance.

With the U.S. universally seen as the perennial backer of the state of Israel, and Israel's history of warfare with predominantly Muslim countries, the idea of a major

¹⁷ David Kaplan, "Exclusive: Nuclear Monitoring of Muslims Done Without Search Warrants," *U.S. News and World Report* (December 22, 2005).

<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/nest/051222nest.htm> (accessed February 11, 2006).

¹⁸ James Risen and Eric Lichtblau, "Bush Lets U.S. Spy on Callers Without Courts," *New York Times*, December 16, 2005, A1.

American Judeo-Christian religious landmark or leader being targeted simply because of America's alliance with Israel is also a possibility. There is an inherent danger for America in this association as highlighted by Bruce Hoffman when he wrote about a failed operation in the early 1980s launched by Israeli terrorists to destroy the Dome of the Rock, Islam's third holiest shrine:

They were convinced that through their actions they could themselves hasten redemption. Even more alarming, though, was the terrorists' ancillary motive. By obliterating so venerated an Islamic shrine, they also sought to spark a cataclysmic war between Israel and the Muslim world.¹⁹

A similar attack today could quickly embroil America directly in a Middle Eastern war because of its alliance with Israel, immediately making the American homeland and its religious venues potential battlefields.

C. THE TERRORISTS

Author Clark McCauley, Professor of Psychology at Bryn Mawr College at the University of Pennsylvania, offers another rationale for how Islamic terrorists approach targeting. His approach could also apply to the targeting of American religious venues when viewed from the perspective of terrorist organizations experiencing a "psychology of crisis:"

The psychology of cause and comrades is multiplied by a sense of crisis. Many observers have noted an apocalyptic quality in the worldview of terrorists. Terrorists see the world precariously balanced between good and evil, at a point where action can bring about the triumph of the good....Action, extreme action, is required immediately, for the triumph of the good and the defeat of evil.²⁰

Some might argue that Islam, as one of the three Abrahamic faiths, conceptually holds Jesus as a Prophet and His teachings as holy and worthy of respect and therefore not at risk of an Islamist attack. Attacks on churches and the possibility that a psychology of crisis exists with modern day radical Islam, however, offer another view – that an attack on the West's "faith infrastructure" is feasible.

¹⁹ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 103.

²⁰ Clark McCauley, "Psychological Issues in Understanding Terrorism and the Response to Terrorism," in *The Psychology of Terrorism*, vol. 3, ed. Chris E. Stout (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 3-30.

While America may desire to maintain its historically strict separation of church and state, the country remains engaged in an asymmetric war with terrorist organizations that don't hesitate to attack churches in Pakistan and Iraq. In short, terrorists in search of a religious target in America have a host of potential targets and attack profile options from which they can choose.

Author Robert Pape, a professor of political science at the University of Chicago and terrorism expert, in *The Strategic Logic of Terrorism*, describes a category of terrorism called "destructive terrorism" as one that is "more aggressive, seeking to coerce opponents as well as mobilize support for the cause. Destructive terrorists seek to inflict real harm on members of the target audience at the risk of losing sympathy for their cause."²¹ In short, an organization practicing this extreme method of terrorism doesn't care about the ramifications of its attack, as long as it achieves a high magnitude of destruction.

The Al Qaeda profile is certainly high on America's homeland security watch list, but there are also other threats from organizations which might have an interest in attacking a religious site or leader dear to the greater American population's interest. A number of terrorist threats may be envisioned:

- Extreme single-issue terrorist groups, or like-minded individuals, who desire a conflict between the West and Islam.
- U.S. Muslims who have immigrated legally – Large Muslim populations exist near many American metropolitan areas and nodes of critical infrastructure, providing an invaluable resource to both foreign and domestic radical Islamic terrorists, as well as a support network the 9/11 Commission Report determined was important to the success of the 9/11 attacks.²²
- Nation of Islam – Although it has no history of militant leanings, a radicalized Nation of Islam would provide many new challenges to Homeland Security, including increased terrorist identification challenges, the impact of a large U.S. prison influence, and continued spread throughout the country.

²¹ Robert Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 3 (August 2003): 343.

²² 9/11 Commission Report. 217-220.

- Type-A Terrorists – In their study, *Deterrence & Influence in Counterterrorism*, Paul Davis and Brian Jenkins argue that the Type A terrorist is driven by the action or the passion itself.²³ This type of terrorist would pose an extreme risk based on their propensity to do whatever it takes, even irrational behavior, to achieve their goals.
- Other militant Islamic groups, such as Hamas, etc., who may wish to focus their efforts towards achieving an independent Palestine by shifting their efforts to the United States in an attempt to create a lever of influence for their agenda in the Middle East.

D. TARGET SELECTION

While military and federal government installations become increasingly hardened targets, much of America remains vulnerable, including shopping malls, schools, major sporting events, and places of worship (often highly populated locales). Terrorists might target symbolic American religious targets that represent American values at their most, ironically, sacred. As described in a July 2005 CIA Al-Qaeda threat publication, Intelligence reporting since 2001 continues to suggest that Al Qaeda views soft targets, which would include religious venues in general, as viable alternatives to more hardened targets.²⁴

Clearly, the attacks of 9/11 set a fateful standard of Islamic Extremist attacks on U.S. soil with the Al Qaeda terrorist organization achieving unparalleled success, notoriety, and, to other terrorist groups, a standard and level of glory to be admired and pursued.

On 9/11, Al Qaeda achieved a victory which will forever be replayed and reprinted in the media, commonly referred to as a day that will “live in imagery.” The symbolism of the American and United airliners crashing into the financial heart of New York City, the impact on the American military bastion of power - the Pentagon, and the attempted attack on American government itself at the White House or Capitol Building were as operationally cunning, impressive, stunning, and simple in their execution as they

²³ Paul K. Davis and Brian Michael Jenkins, *Deterrence & Influence in Counterterrorism: A Component in the War on al Qaeda* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2002), 11.

²⁴ *A Collection of CTC/OTA's Papers on Al-Aq'ida's Threat to the U.S. Homeland*, Central Intelligence Agency's Counterterrorism Center's Office of Terrorism Analysis, July 7, 2005 (Unclassified/For Official Use Only), 14.

were grotesquely heinous to the civilized West. If symbolic attacks were that successful in 2001, and organizations like Al Qaeda have shown a desire to ensure their attacks on embassies and the USS Cole are also captured in imagery, an assumption that further symbolic attacks are probable is no stretch of the imagination. Since financial, government, and military targets have already been attacked, the idea of a different symbolic target, such as those with religious affiliation, may also be plausible.

There are many target selection scenarios that can be postulated. For example, an attack at a highly populated Billy Graham religious gathering would provide a large number of victims all of whom would be seen suffering on a video-recorded and possibly televised stage and broadcast to millions around the world. It could also be conducted against Graham's self-described "Christian Crusade," which would almost certainly be perceived as an attack against a crusade in Muslim countries and serve to feed the interests of the attacking terrorist organizations, regardless of the use or intent of the Graham ministry's use of the word "Crusade." In addition, a successful terrorist attack on the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. could be viewed on Al Jazeera by millions of Muslims as a successful strike against an icon of both American government and religion. It would be an ideal target in that it resides in the nation's capital, arguably has the perceived international image of being symbolically "national" in prominence based on its name, and the fact that it is a majestic building where numerous Protestant faiths worship. Finally, the National Cathedral is where the President of the United States and his family worship (as well as numerous other senior politicians and allied dignitaries). If there was significance in the fact that the 9/11 attackers chose American and United airline flights to hijack (based on their perceived nationalistic company names), it makes the idea of the National Cathedral being targeted plausible. Other potential targets might include the Crystal Cathedral in Coral Gables, Florida; a highly-populated Jewish Synagogue in any urban city (thus aligning the Jewish and Christian faiths further against Islam); or a highly-populated Roman Catholic service, preferably one led by a prominent and senior Bishop (thus meeting the Islamic perspective of their culture where religious leaders like Imams are extremely important in their faith).

Another possible scenario would be for the terrorists to attack a religious venue and coordinate a simultaneous attack upon other symbolic targets that might represent

evil to a radical Islamic fundamentalist (e.g., Las Vegas casinos, Bourbon Street in New Orleans, Hollywood, etc.). In one series of attacks, the attackers might forever link Judeo-Christian worship sites and stereotypically “sinful” sites in the minds of Muslims world-wide and win a much larger information warfare campaign, ultimately gaining even more ground for the terrorists and their agendas.

E. TIMING

As demonstrated on 9/11, Al Qaeda’s method of operations centered on a near-simultaneous attack plan to maximize the effect of surprise. The aforementioned 2005 CIA Al-Qaeda threat publication states, “Hitting a number of such structures simultaneously could have the same effect as hitting a single high-profile (and more hardened) target.”²⁵

Al Qaeda’s attack planning has historically involved the capturing of video imagery during their attacks for use in their information warfare campaigns and public diplomacy. Logically, the timing might be in conjunction with events that draw large audiences or events that are televised, thereby reaching a much broader audience and increasing the likelihood of repeated images being received throughout the developed world at large. As at 1972 terrorist incident in Munich or in the case of the Chechen-Separatist terrorist attack on a Russian School house in Beslan in 2004 when 331 hostages were killed, including 186 children, terrorists may also try to maximize and magnify the effect of their message through the media.²⁶

High-visibility National Special Security Events (NSSEs) might offer the perfect venue of publicity, politics, and population for the terrorists to mark in conjunction with an attack on a religious landmark, for example. Terrorists could also coordinate their attacks to coincide with religious holidays (e.g., Good Friday), significant anniversaries (e.g., 9/11), or events with VIP’s in attendance (e.g., President Bush attending services at the National Cathedral) and meet all the requirements of an optimal, and increasingly classic, Al Qaeda attack.

²⁵ *A Collection of CTC/OTA’s Papers*, 14.

²⁶ Fatima Tlisova, “Beslan Panel: Authorities Botched Rescue,” *Associated Press*, Tuesday, November 29, 2005. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/11/29/AR2005112900481.html (accessed February 11, 2006)

F. ATTACK PROFILES

Depending on the location of the religious target and the terrorists' ability to conduct reconnaissance and pre-attack operational planning, terrorists have myriad attack profiles, ranging from simple to complex, from which they can select.

An armed terrorist attack and hostage-taking scenario at a religious venue, in the context of this research, is the most probable scenario. A lone terrorist or a small organization of terrorists could conduct an armed attack with small arms easily accessible in the United States at gun shows or even Wal-Mart. The taking of hostages, as in the attack at Beslan, would guarantee media coverage, but be a terminal event (the attackers would either be arrested or killed).

Likewise, the attackers might elect to use a bomb (e.g., incendiary, fertilizer-based explosive material as used in Oklahoma City, staged plastic explosives such as the types used in the Madrid and London train bombings, etc.). A well-planned bombing would provide the bombers with an opportunity to clear the area before the explosion, and thus the chance of surviving the experience and plan and execute later attacks. The terrorist cell and its base of operations would remain uncompromised and fully operational.

As seen routinely in Iraq, suicide bombing is another method of attack terrorists could use in America. The difficulty in acquiring an adequate amount of high-yield explosives, however, would make it challenging to successfully execute. Reconstituting their operational cells of aspiring martyrs in the United States (as opposed to their seemingly never ending supply in Iraq) might make this option less palatable. Given that churches, for example, unlike airports and federal buildings across the country, are not required to have traffic barriers in front of their entrances, they are therefore more vulnerable to a vehicle-laden bomb and, based on the inherent openness of their subcultures, even more vulnerable to a pedestrian suicide bomber. With America's challenging border security status, an attack on a religious venue with a weapon of mass destruction (WMD) is also feasible, although less probable – based on it being difficult to acquire.

If the modus operandi of terrorists remains true, they will continue to plan and attack vulnerable soft targets, striking at a time and location of their choosing, and only after thorough planning, reconnaissance, and rehearsals.

G. CONSEQUENCES OF A TERRORIST ATTACK UPON A RELIGIOUS VENUE IN AMERICA

A terrorist organization that successfully attacked a religious target in America would reap multiple benefits. An Islamist attack on a Judeo-Christian place of worship would, arguably, be considered retribution and justified in the “1000-year memory” of Islam, anchored in the dark history of the Crusades and ending in the most recent Arab broadcasts of the aforementioned U.S. atrocities in Iraq. The terrorists would be seen as righteous, effectively attacking infidel faiths. Their attacks would be a show of strength against “corrupt” Western and American values and America’s sense of religious freedom upon which the country was founded. The act of violence would simultaneously send a signal of Islamic power, success, and superiority to the greater Muslim population of the world. Any retaliatory attack by the West could result in the establishment, synthesis, renewal, and uprising of the Islamic Caliphate against the West.

If a terrorist attack did occur at a religious venue in America, it would affect citizens in a very personal way. The imagery of airliners crashing into the World Trade Centers was tragic, but watching individual victims leaping to their deaths from the Twin Towers personalized that terror for every viewer regardless of their proximity to New York. Likewise, an attack upon a church might achieve more terrifying results on an even more intimate level – threatening individual Americans where many feel the safest, including places of worship. Terror is a state of extreme psychological fear and a place of worship is a venue commonly associated with comfort. If an act of terror took place in a house of faith, the dichotomy of those two extremes of human emotion might magnify the resulting trauma. In 1999, an American religious venue near Fort Worth, Texas, became the scene of murder when a crazed gunman opened fire inside Wedgewood Baptist Church:

On September 15, 1999, a deranged man in a black trench coat entered a church in Ft. Worth, Texas, armed with bullets and a pipe bomb. He approached a group of worshippers in the foyer awaiting choir practice. He asked about a prayer meeting, and then began shooting. He headed to the sanctuary, which he sprayed with gunfire as he shouted obscenities.

Seven were dead and many more injured. A teenage boy stopped the slaughter when he yelled out defiantly, "You can kill me but you can't kill my faith!" Upon hearing those words, the assassin found a pew, sat down, and shot himself... The morning after the massacre an impromptu prayer session was held at the pastor's house. The church was now a crime scene, filled with police, coroners, chalked lines, bullet-ridden oak walls, and blood-soaked carpets. A surprise attendee at that prayer session was Texas Governor George W. Bush, who made the 186-mile trip from Austin. He arrived unannounced and left almost as quietly. A church of God had been converted into a Texas killing field, and the governor came to offer his personal prayers.²⁷

For individuals, a terrorist attack at an American place of worship could result in panic, acts of retribution, an unsettling of their personal and professional lives not unlike the attacks of 9/11, and an overall heightened sense of personal fear that could have serious effects on health and well-being if prolonged.

An attack on a religious venue in America could have similar effects on American society as a whole, including actual panic of the masses, isolation of the populace as citizens avoid public gatherings including worship sites and develop and manifest a widespread lack of faith in governmental and religious leaders.

If terrorists succeeded in attacking a religious venue within the United States, the ability of governmental and religious leaders to adequately deal with the psychological aftermath among the American populace would be dependent upon thorough pre and post-incident planning and training.

Of course, an attack on a religious venue in America could have quite the opposite effect. The public's response to an act of terror against a religious venue might have the same effect of the 9/11 attacks, when the country was caught up in a wave of nationalism not seen since the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. An outraged public could also become resolved in its solidarity and defiantly attend public worship services across the country. For example, the day after the attack on the church in Fort Worth, Texas, Senior Pastor Dr. Al Meredith, issued a press release to the public and his congregation, including the following excerpt:

...At present, we are hoping to return to our Worship Center on Sunday morning at the regular times of 9:00 and 10:35 a.m. This has not been an

²⁷ Dr. Paul Kengor, "A Governor and a Shooting in Fort Worth," September 24, 2004. www.gcc.edu/alumni/vvconcise/2004/Sept_24_04_Kengor.html (accessed February 11, 2006)

easy decision as many have been left deeply traumatized. However, we believe it is important that we not allow the Kingdom of Darkness to

hinder what God wants to accomplish in His people. Our Sunday School classes will function as small group support teams as the Body comforts one another.²⁸

²⁸ Dr. Al Meredith, "Press Release 9/16/99, Wedgwood Baptist Church," www.wedgwoodbc.org/default.asp?page=101&action=getpage (accessed February 11, 2006)

III. RELIGIOUS VENUE SECURITY

If the Almighty were to rebuild the world and asked me for advice, I would have English Channels round every country. And the atmosphere would be such that anything which attempted to fly would be set on fire.

~ Prime Minister Winston Churchill

A. AMERICA'S RELIGIOUS SECURITY TODAY

Today, no federal agency has been specifically assigned the responsibility of protecting or monitoring the security of major religious landmarks or icons within the United States. The U.S. Department of the Interior is assigned historical landmark protection which covers sites like the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, and Independence Hall in Philadelphia, PA, but not major active sites of worship or sites with a significant identity with particular faiths (e.g., The Temple Square of the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah or St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, NY.).

Security at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC is provided by the Secret Service whenever the President or other dignitaries are in attendance, but the cathedral remains normally unprotected by federal law enforcement officials.²⁹

Today, the Billy Graham Ministry, Inc. and other major religious figures contract their security through private security firms or the contracting of off-duty police officers. At their televised events a team of retired and volunteer security officers with various law enforcement backgrounds provide protection.³⁰

There has been limited governmental involvement in religious security matters on the local, state, and federal levels:

B. LOCAL INVOLVEMENT IN RELIGIOUS SECURITY IN AMERICA

Besides “routine” engagement initiatives, the events of 9/11 and the onset of the war in Iraq caused major metropolitan cities, like New York, to incorporate “surge” strategies to deter terrorism at home. New York City’s well-publicized “Hercules

²⁹ www.secretservice.gov. (accessed February 28, 2006)

³⁰ Toney Carnes, “Billy Does it Again,” *ChristianityToday.com*. June 28, 2005. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/126/23.0.html> (accessed February 11, 2006).

Teams” set a modern day standard for law enforcement surge operations. Author Craig Horowitz described the Hercules Teams in his NewYorkMetro.com interview with New York’s Police Commissioner Ray Kelly:

And there are the Hercules Teams, elite, heavily armed, Special Forces-type police units that pop up daily around the city. It can be at the Empire State Building, the Brooklyn Bridge, Times Square, or the stock exchange, wherever the day’s intelligence reports suggest they could be needed. These small teams arrive in black suburbans, sheathed in armor-plated vests and carrying 9-mm. submachine guns – sometimes with air or sea support. Their purpose is to intimidate and to very publicly mount a show of force. Kelly knows that terrorists do a lot of reconnaissance, and the Hercules Teams were designed to disrupt their planning. Like an ADT warning sign in front of a house, they’re also intended to send a message that this is not an easy target.³¹

On a smaller scale and with a more holistic approach, civic action groups have shown an inclination to take an active role in the security of their communities, working directly with local government to help fight crime, including the protection of religious worship sites. In Grants Pass, Oregon, a city of approximately 25,000 residents, an organization called “Concerned Fathers Against Crime” or C-FAC has been working closely with local police since 1995 in a community-policing effort that helps protect homes, schools, and churches, among other sites. This initiative now has the political support of a U.S. Congressman and has found its government and church-backed initiative gaining access to the national stage in Washington, D.C.³² C-FAC founder Mr. Bob Just, addresses this grass-roots effort of locals taking care of problems locally when he stated, “We use the system of the family – fathers, mothers and soon the youth – working together on different missions to build what Congressman Walden called ‘community connectedness’ in his recent letter about us to [DHS Secretary Michael] Chertoff.”³³

Unlike a Papal visit, the security requirements for a visit by other major religious figures are predominately the responsibility of local authorities. In 1995, the city of New

³¹ Craig Horowitz, “The NYPD’s War on Terror,” *NewYorkMetro.com*, February 3, 2003. www.newyorkmetro.com/nymetro/news/features/n_8286 (accessed February 11, 2006)

³² Ron Strom, “Homeland Insecurity: Church-based civil defense? Small-town plan reaches White House door,” *wnd.com*, November 16, 2005. http://www wnd com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=47424 (accessed February 28, 2006)

³³ Ibid.

Bedford, Massachusetts hosted a visit by the late Nobel Prize winning Mother Teresa. Security was the number one concern for New Bedford officials with numerous precautions taken, including: a six-block vehicular parking ban, a physician and emergency medical personnel on standby, 60 uniformed and plain clothed police officers on duty, a full motorcade escort, use of four K-9 dogs for crowd control and bomb detection, an operational command center, the use of metal detectors at every door of the church, and even an alteration to the proceedings of the Mass itself – communion was taken by the public from the center of the church, vice near the alter where Mother Teresa was seated.³⁴

Local involvement in religious security is not limited to local government. During the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints enacted heightened temporary security procedures for a 40-acre downtown area, including Temple Square, the Conference Center, Joseph Smith Memorial Building, and the Church Office Building. During the Olympics, church officials leased metal detectors, used heightened mail-handling procedures in light of the recent anthrax scare, and searched handbags and other closed containers.³⁵

Since 9/11, many large so-called “megachurches” in America have developed positions for full-time security directors for their congregations, some of which number in the thousands. In the October 2004 issue of *Security Management*, author Michael Gips wrote about an organized group of these megachurches, called the “Gatekeeper’s Alliance.” Gips writes about a group of these megachurches:

...about 20 of them have banded together in a group called the Gatekeeper’s Alliance ... to share and discuss security information and suggestions. With religious hostility more evident since 9-11, and violent attacks at houses of worship in Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, Tunisia, India, and elsewhere, some administrators at high-profile U.S. religious facilities or symbols feel the terrorist threat increasing. ³⁶

³⁴ Carol Lee Costa-Crowell, “Security is tight for Mother Teresa Visit,” *Standard Times*, June 13, 1995. <http://www.southcoasttoday.com/daily/06-95/06-13-95/0613mothersecurity.HTML> (accessed February 11, 2006).

³⁵ Lynn Arave, “Metal Detectors Will Leave Temple Square After Event,” *Deseret News*, October 30, 2001. <http://deseretnews.com/oly/view/0,3949,35000118,00.html> (accessed February 11, 2006).

³⁶ Michael Gips, “Protection Goes Beyond Prayer,” *Security Management* 48, no. 10 (2004): 18. The leader of Gatekeeper’s Alliance, Mr. Chuck Chadwick, is the security director of Fellowship Church in Grapevine, Texas. Fellowship Church’s weekly attendance is approximately 20,000.

At the local level, Jewish synagogues have been forced to deal more directly with security of their worship services, especially in the wake of 9/11. At Beth El synagogue in Norfolk, Virginia, off-duty police officers attend all worship services. The Synagogue officials issue admission tickets for high holy days and routinely keep the outer doors locked during services. If a threat emerges, the Rabbi also has the means to trip a silent alarm.³⁷

C. STATE INVOLVEMENT IN RELIGIOUS SECURITY IN AMERICA

At the state level, there have also been instances of proactive routine law enforcement efforts involving religious venue security. The Commonwealth of Virginia, under its “Crush Crime” campaign, initiated a landmark religious security program called “Worship Watch:”

In response to the number of worship center burnings that occurred in recent years, the Virginia State Police developed the Worship Watch Program utilizing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques -- the practice of determining natural surveillance, territorial reinforcement, natural access control and target hardening for businesses, homes and communities. With Worship Watch, troopers assess the safety of the worship center and make recommendations for improvement and crime prevention, and they also meet with the religious head of the center and other leadership to train them on crime prevention techniques to protect their centers and members.³⁸

D. FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT IN RELIGIOUS SECURITY IN AMERICA

In 1997, President Clinton established the National Church Arson Task Force (NCATF) because of the mounting church arson fires primarily in the Southern United States. During the Civil Rights era of the 1960s, black churches were being fire-bombed throughout the southern United States, and as the crimes continued, the issue finally rose to the federal level. This was the first incident where a task force of various federal agencies combined forces to directly affect the security of private religious venues. The NCATF was comprised of members of the Department of the Treasury, U.S. Department

³⁷ Steven Vegh, “Churches Call on Congregations, Consultants in Efforts to Curb Crime,” *Virginian Pilot*, January 29, 2006. <http://home.hamptonroads.com/stories/story.cfm?story=98766&ran=38122> (accessed February 11, 2006).

³⁸ *Crush Crime Campaign*. Virginia State Police, 1995. www.vsp.state.va.us/crime_prevention.htm (accessed February 11, 2006).

of Justice's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). From 1996 to 1998 the Federal Government awarded 3 million dollars in grants to counties in 13 states to improve their surveillance and enforcement efforts near their most vulnerable houses of worship.³⁹ In the Task Force's Year 2000 Report to the President, over 827 arsons were investigated, resulting in 294 convictions. Additionally, the task force assisted many of the nation's churches via security consultations, including recommendations for extra exterior lighting, neighborhood watch-like policies, etc. The ATF also offers citizens the "Threat Assessment Guide for Houses of Worship" to share lessons learned from the NCATF, its recommendations being primarily arson-focused, however, and without a post-9/11 counter-terrorism theme.⁴⁰

Whether or not there is a direct correlation between the task force's efforts and the decrease in church arson fires can be debated, but a senior ATF Agent recently described the NCATF as still intact, but not as active as it had been during the Clinton Administration.⁴¹ If the task force can be seen as a success, it would be because of its Presentially-directed establishment and support.

In the end, however, private security organizations constitute the vast majority of religious security support, with the federal, state, and local governments only getting involved when a specific threat or a national terror alert makes it a priority. Such was the case in May of 2003, when the terror alert was raised and New York City government officials sent their Hercules Teams near potential terrorist targets, including churches and synagogues, in an effort to disrupt and deter an attack.⁴²

³⁹ National Church Arson Task Force, *Second Year Report for the President*, October 1998, 1. http://www.atf.treas.gov/pub/gen_pub/arson98.htm, (accessed February 11, 2006).

⁴⁰ Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, "Threat Assessment Guide for Houses of Worship," <http://www.aft.gov/pub/threat/index.htm>, (accessed February 11, 2006).

⁴¹ Phone interview with Special Agent Barbara Anderson, Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), May 1, 2005.

⁴² William K. Rasahbaum, "Security is Stepped Up at Landmarks and Borders," *New York Times*, May 21, 2003, A.20.

E. OTHER NATIONAL RELIGIOUS SECURITY MODELS

Of all Western sites, the Vatican is probably the best protected. Swiss soldiers protect the Holy See and the Vatican grounds. Since 1505, Swiss Guards have protected the Vatican, wearing ceremonial uniforms of vibrant orange and purple, and Conquistador helmets. The Official Swiss Guard website provides further background:

The Swiss Guard currently consists of a total of 100 men: four officials, one chaplain, twenty-three noncommissioned officers, seventy halberdiers, and two drummers. The halberd is the traditional weapon carried by Swiss Guards. The members of the Swiss Guard reside in a barrack in Vatican City. They serve for two years, with the possibility of extending the period to a maximum of twenty-five years. During this period they receive training in self-defense, attend shooting practice, take courses in Italian and study the organizational structure of the Vatican. At the end of the first year they must take a very thorough exam. Guard recruits must be Roman Catholic men of Swiss nationality who are single, under thirty years old and stand at least 5-feet, 8-inches tall. Guards need to have completed their initial military training in the Swiss Armed Forces, and obtained a certificate of good conduct from an ecclesiastical and a civil authority. The Swiss Guard is all that is left of a pontifical military corps that medieval popes once fielded to exert temporal power on a part of the Italian peninsula - power that is now restricted to the 108 acres of Vatican City.⁴³

The Swiss Guards protect the Vatican and the Pope during his travels, but they are inadequately prepared for an attack on the level of that experienced on 9/11.

Efforts to study and analyze Israeli religious venue security policies and procedures were unsuccessful. Regarding Israeli religious venue security policies specifically, one is hard-pressed to find open-source information on governmental involvement in security standardization. It is just as noteworthy, however, that there is an abundance of Anti-Defamation League (ADL) precautionary security guidance on the Internet while the Israelis, long a target of religiously-motivated terrorism, are understandably secretive about their security procedures for religious venues.

⁴³ Vatican Swiss Guard official website, http://ch.c-d.org/ch/culture_swissguard.html (accessed February 11, 2006).

IV. FEDERAL POLICY REVIEW

People everywhere want to be able to speak freely; choose who will govern them; worship as they please; educate their children—male and female; own property; and enjoy the benefits of their labor. These values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society – and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages.

~ President George W. Bush, The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 17, 2002.

A. CURRENT U.S. POLICY AND APPLICABLE LITERATURE

This literature review briefly probes and assesses research surrounding federal policies towards the physical security of major religious landmarks, leaders, or events within the United States. The literature reviewed consisted of major national strategic policies that deal with national security. This research found that there is an absence of significant literature which addresses this issue specifically, however, there is an abundance of information available on critical infrastructure protection, including historical landmarks, etc.

Besides the well-known historical precedent of the bloody Crusades and the current struggle of radical Islam against the West being fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, there is another consideration regarding the physical protection of religious sites, events, or leaders at home—America’s separation of church and state. Indeed, for the purposes of this research there exists a significant paradox: in the United States, federal, state, and local governments cannot mandate control and protection over one of the nation’s most prized civil liberties—freedom of religion. The U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment reads, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”⁴⁴ Although this leads many to believe that government cannot get involved with religious affairs, when read literally, the amendment can mean that

⁴⁴ U.S. Const. *First Amendment*. http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html (accessed March 9, 2006)

government in America cannot have a preference towards a particular religion when making laws. Indeed, Author Michael J. Malbin, in his policy study “Religion and Politics: The Intentions of the Authors of the First Amendment,” wrote:

All of the speakers, except Sherman, agreed that the Bill of Rights should prohibit the new government from establishing a national religion. In addition, they did not want the government to have the power deliberately to favor one religion over another. But every one of them also seemed to agree that the Bill of Rights should not prevent the federal government from giving nondiscriminatory assistance to religion, as long as the assistance is incidental to the performance of a power delegated to the government.⁴⁵

Additionally, it is also noteworthy that the U.S. Constitution is the only official federal document or policy that addresses religion as a national priority.

In President Bush’s introduction to *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, he mentions freedom of worship as a universal desire.⁴⁶ Although it was published one year after the attacks of 9/11, and speaks of deterrence, its primary focus is on the importance of intelligence gathering and transforming America’s military to meet the current threat of terrorism. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the broad range of vulnerabilities facing the nation following 9/11, nowhere in the National Security Strategy (NSS) is religious security addressed.

The Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD-8) does not directly address the security of religious venues in America, however, it does define the term preparedness as referring to “the existence of plans, procedures, policies, training, and equipment necessary at the Federal, State, and local level to maximize the ability to prevent, respond to, and recover from major events.”⁴⁷ It also designates the Secretary of Homeland Security as the principal Federal official for coordinating the implementation of all-hazards preparedness in the United States and the development of the National Preparedness Goal which establishes “measurable readiness priorities and targets that appropriately balance the potential threat and magnitude of terrorist attacks, major

⁴⁵ Michael J. Malbin, “Religion and Politics: The Intentions of the Authors of the First Amendment,” *American Enterprise Institute Studies in Legal Policy* (Washington, D.C., 1978), 9.

⁴⁶ The White House. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, Presidential Introduction, 1.

⁴⁷ The White House. Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD-8), December 17, 2003, 3-4.

disasters, and other emergencies...”⁴⁸ Although not specifically designated as the lead on religious venue security in HSPD-8, based on its wording, the Secretary would be a logical candidate for any new federal religious venue oversight guidance. In March of 2005, the federal government released its 15 national planning scenarios for disaster preparedness and response, including biological, radiological, and nuclear scenarios among others, however, no scenario covers an attack on a large public gathering, such as the case in a major religious venue worship service (or for that matter, a sporting event or concert).⁴⁹

The *National Strategy for Homeland Security* states that America should protect its “key assets—Individual targets whose destruction...could create local disaster or profoundly damage our Nation’s morale or confidence.”⁵⁰ This initial strategy also describes other examples of critical assets, including local schools, courthouses, and bridges as “critical to the communities they serve,” however, it does not list religious landmarks, individual churches, special religious events, or the protection of religious leaders themselves as critical.⁵¹ This strategy reiterates that America’s vulnerabilities are seemingly limitless, but offers specific areas which are prioritized to receive resources, none of which are religiously affiliated.

The National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets states that one category of key assets “comprises the diverse array of national monuments, symbols, and icons that represent our Nation’s heritage, traditions and values, and political power.”⁵² This strategy also includes a list of critical infrastructure categories, including “assets of national importance.” That list includes: “Large gathering sites,” and “national monuments and icons,” two categories that could be

⁴⁸ The White House. Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD-8), December 17, 2003, 3-4.

⁴⁹ Eric Lipton, “U.S. Report Lists Possibilities for Terrorist Attacks and Likely Toll,” *New York Times*, March 16, 2005. <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/16/politics/16home.html?ex=1139806800&en=be460482b4e1d519&ei=5070> (accessed February 11, 2006).

⁵⁰ *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, 30.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² The White House, *The National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets*, February 2003, 71.

directly related to religious venues, depending on the significance of the venue.⁵³ Although religious landmarks may be inferred here, there is, again, no direct reference.

In April of 2004, \$25 million dollars were approved for the Department of Homeland Security FY 2005 budget, marking the first time substantial federal funds would go directly to the security of religious venues, among other non-profit organizations.⁵⁴ In an unprecedented and significant move, Senators Frist and Specter spearheaded the support for monies to be set aside for homeland security equipment, personnel, and training to prepare non-profits for international terrorist attacks. Ultimately, \$25 million dollar appropriations were earmarked in the FY05 budget for State Administrative Agencies to sub-grant to local organizations at their discretion.⁵⁵

The original High Risk Non-Profit Security Act listed very specific eligibility requirements. In order to be eligible, non-profit organizations had to meet a number of requirements, the first being Department of Homeland Security Secretary determination “based on the vulnerability of the specific site of the nonprofit organization to international terrorist attacks.”⁵⁶ In order to receive grant monies, eligible non-profits would then provide the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security paperwork that verifies that the non-profit “hosted a gathering of at least 100 or more persons at least once each month at the nonprofit organization site during the preceding 12 months,” or “provides services to at least 500 persons each year.”⁵⁷ In the actual approved grant guidance, however, grant eligibility was articulated far more vaguely and matched the urban area security initiative (UASI) requirements, including: existence of “credible

⁵³ The White House, *The National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets*, February 2003, 83.

⁵⁴ U.S. Senate, *High Risk Nonprofit Security Enhancement Act of 2004*, 1-3. <http://www.govtrack.us/data/us/bills.text/108/h4108.pdf> (accessed February 11, 2006). S.2275 to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 was never passed by the Senate. However, the basic initiative was used in Congressional conference deliberations for DHS FY 2005 Appropriations which is how the \$25 million became funded.

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness – Office for Domestic Preparedness, *Fiscal Year 2005 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP), Program Guidelines and Application Kit*, October 18, 2004, 69. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/fy05hsgp.pdf> (accessed February 11, 2006).

⁵⁶ U.S. Senate, *High Risk Nonprofit Security Enhancement Act of 2004*, 6.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 8-9.

threat, presence of critical infrastructure, vulnerability, population, population density, law enforcement investigative and enforcement activity, and the existence of formal mutual aid agreements.”⁵⁸

Although the bill and Senator Frist’s Congressional Testimony do not emphasize the direct link between federal funding and religious organizations, there as an inference in the Senator’s testimony as evidenced by his inclusion of the word “synagogues” as authorized non-profit qualified for funding. In that testimony, Senator Frist also articulated the budgetary focus on the threat to soft target non-profits:

The Director of Central Intelligence has stated that al-Qaeda has turned its attention to soft targets....It is my intention, as sponsor with Senator Specter of the Senate provision, that the Secretary (Homeland Security) should issue regulations to ensure that such funds are disbursed in a manner that ensures basic assistance for the maximum number of institutions and are dedicated to protecting Americans operating or utilizing nonprofits from international terrorist attacks and are not used for other purposes.⁵⁹

An additional \$25 million has been approved for non-profits in FY06, and along with meeting all FY05 eligibility requirements, the verbiage for the FY06 appropriations provides additional requirements:

That \$25,000,000 shall be available until expended for assistance to organizations (as described under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from tax section 501(a) of such Code) determined by the Secretary to be at high risk of international terrorist attack, and that these determinations shall not be delegated to any Federal, State, or local government official: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall certify to the Committees on Appropriations of the Senate and the House of Representatives the threat to each designated tax exempt grantee at least 3 full business days in advance of the announcement of any grant award.⁶⁰

While no federal governmental strategy delineates religious landmarks or events specifically as key assets, there are many Americans who consider their faith, and indirectly their church, as a source of their morale, confidence, and personal values and

⁵⁸ *Fiscal Year 2005 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP)*, 69.

⁵⁹ Congressional Record, Testimony by Senator Bill Frist, October 11, 2004, S11232.

⁶⁰ Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act 2006, Public Law 109-90-October 18, 2005, 13. http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ090.109.pdf (accessed February 11, 2006).

therefore worthy of protection. The successful nonprofit legislation could, arguably, be the evidence and proof that religious influence is affecting American politics and government.

B. FINDINGS OF LITERATURE REVIEWED

Three observations emerge from the literature on the Federal Government's role in Homeland Security: 1) The protection of the American way of life and its cultural values is important; 2) Critical infrastructure and key asset protection are concrete priorities that have been thoroughly covered and funded in major federal homeland security strategies implemented by the Bush Administration; and 3) Whereas federal, state, local, tribal, and private homeland security responsibilities are routinely mentioned in the literature reviewed, the specific role of religious institutions or the protection of major religious landmarks, events, or icons is, from this review, seemingly absent from the scope of all major federal national and homeland security policies.

As highlighted earlier, the federal government is taking steps towards funding religious venue security, albeit under the broad umbrella of nonprofit security, and funding is the perennial litmus test of legitimate federal prioritization.

Based on this literature review, and even in light of non-profit funding, there appears to still be a security vulnerability seam that could be exploited by terrorists seeking another major symbolic attack on American soil.

C. CHALLENGES OF FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT

America's Founding Fathers felt passionately enough about the importance of religion to address it in the U.S. Constitution, but today, in the face of an ongoing global war on terror, questions remain. How can America reconcile its history of separating church and state with the potential threat to the nation's overall national security? What can federal, state, and local governments do to overcome this controversial obstacle to greater security at religious venues, if anything?

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Religion and Expression) is the largest challenge that an effort to federally oversee or coordinate security for religious venues would probably face. Indeed, it is part of the Constitution's Bill of Rights. There

is a common belief in America that it is unconstitutional for government to get involved in religious matters. The First Amendment does state, however, that a single religion cannot be championed by legislation nor can government prohibit the free exercise of a religion. Given that interpretation, the Constitution, arguably, represents no literal impediment to governmental involvement in issues pertaining to religion and homeland security, however governmental forays into religious powder-keg arenas continue to garner great public attention, as evidenced by the Intelligent Design, Stem Cell research, and the Alabama Ten Commandments Statue controversies of 2004-2005. Given these examples, any governmental public involvement directly with religious security is certain to initiate a maelstrom of controversy.

Another major challenge that strategists will face will be that many religious groups may not conform to federal standards regardless of the perceived security benefit or the benefit of security grants. Indeed, many groups may decide to forgo federal security standardization and rely on divine intervention for their protection, while others may see government as having some role, in varying magnitude.

To take a more proactive role and place religious security itself in the public eye, policy-makers would have to first consider the following:

- Constitutional issues, specifically those surrounding the separation of Church and State described in the First Amendment;
- Government involvement with religion threatens the constitutionally-attributed tenets, principles, and values of American governance, potentially to the point that anyone suggesting change would need a strong argument and be prepared to argue a coherent case against powerful and influential special interest groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and other organizations which have the capacity to field legions of constitutional litigators;
- Potential push-back from private religious organizations who might consider any governmental involvement (including local and state) as a threat to their constitutional rights and ideological or chartered principles. This potential whiplash effect, alone, could prove the biggest detriment to governmental involvement;
- The fact that no terrorist organization, to date, has made an overt threat to any American religious organization. It is worth noting, however, that, here, a valid argument exists in support of standardizing law enforcement or security engagement in issues of religious security: Al Qaeda considers the potential of operational surprise in their decision-making process so the fact that no credible threat streams exist doesn't necessarily equate to zero threat;

- A politician supporting more rigorous religious venue security standards would sacrifice significant political capital in the face of no obvious terrorist threat against religious venues;
- Drawing public attention to the issue of religious venue security vulnerability could also make it an attractive target for terrorists and potentially place religious venues even more at risk because of the historically long timelines that government takes to resolve an issue;
- Funding – Where would the money come from? What current homeland security programs would have to sacrifice funding (and presumably a higher level of security) in order to protect religious venues?
- What federal organization, department, or agency would be responsible for monitoring, administering, and enforcing a more robust or standardized security program for law enforcement engagement with private religious organizations or would a new organization need to be established to meet those requirements?

V. ALTERNATIVES FOR FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT IN RELIGIOUS VENUE SECURITY

The need for homeland security is tied to our enduring vulnerability. Terrorists wish to attack us and exploit our vulnerabilities because of the freedoms we hold dear. The U.S. government has no more important mission than protecting the homeland from future terrorist attacks....Homeland security is a shared responsibility. In addition to a national strategy, we need compatible, mutually supporting state, local, and private-sector strategies.

~ President George W. Bush, National Strategy for Homeland Security,
July 16, 2002

In deciding its level of involvement in religious venue security, the U.S. Federal Government has three basic options:

A. NO INVOLVEMENT

This option would be a strict interpretation of Church and State, with absolutely no involvement in religious security on the part of the federal government. The federal government would therefore have no security requirements, standards, oversight, coordination, nor funding of homeland security grants. It offers absolutely no strategic or operational security oversight by the federal level, leaving all involvement at the State, local, and private organizational levels. Private organizations such as religious institutions would continue to provide their own security for events in a manner they deem satisfactory.

This option has already been dismissed by the federal government, as evidenced by the FY05 and FY06 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Acts.

B. MAINTAIN STATUS QUO

This alternative supports the aforementioned FY05 and FY06 Appropriations Acts, providing primarily budgetary grants to eligible non-profits with requirements, and, as previously discussed, the FY06 federal appropriations language is becoming more

restrictive. States will have more eligibility requirements than the FY05 appropriations language mandated, including more restrictions on how they distribute the homeland security grant monies.

This option represents the “lightest” federal government footprint in an incentive-based form.

C. FEDERALLY REGULATED

This alternative would be the most draconian option for federal involvement. The federal government would mandate security standardization among all non-profits (including religious venues). Failure of non-profit compliance would result in the loss of tax-free status (or some measure of their tax free exemption).

This policy option would most likely be harshly received by the American Public, intrude on America’s societal tenets against direct governmental intrusion into religious affairs, and cause significant political problems for policy-makers. From the outset, this alternative would be politically untenable and therefore not a practical option.

VI. CLERGY FOCUS GROUP

In November of 2005, a small focus group of twelve clergy from Hampton Roads, Virginia were given a presentation on this topic by the author then surveyed regarding their personal opinions about federal government involvement in security for their respective houses of worship, including the aforementioned policy options. Based on the small size of the group, the statistical results of the survey are too inconclusive to provide valid empirical data, but a few written post-questionnaire comments from the respondents were nonetheless enlightening and underscored the sensitivity of some clergy regarding government involvement with religious security:

I am a strong advocate for the separation of church and state with no governmental monies going toward a religious organization—even on security issues. While the government may provide law enforcement agents as requested, the giving of any monies is not appropriate.

~ Baptist Minister with 150 congregants

I wouldn't want Federal Government involvement at all. We are currently improving our security with a consultant.

~ Episcopal Minister with 400 congregants

The worst thing I could imagine is the federal government regulating, let alone enforcing, what we do with our worship space. The last thing I want is more government intrusion into the religious spheres of life. Let's be honest and have a little humility, does anyone rationally think our little church with its very modest facilities is in any way inviting, let alone known to any terrorists.... I could list one hundred more exposed and prominent sites on Norfolk's west side alone....We need much less paranoia relative to terrorism—we are not some persecuted minority in America. If I were in a Jewish synagogue I could have a bit more sympathy for this effort and rationale. However, the whole premise rests upon a view of a nanny state moving further and further (and more and more intrusively) into every square inch of our lives. What's next, regulating and incentivizing defending our own homes....talk about the 2nd Amendment gone amuck...and frankly, if there is ANY legitimacy to our little places of worship being exposed to terrorism in our little town, the whole country will have devolved into chaos and civil war. If such violence or terrorism gets as far down as our neighborhood, we would be

as involved in a civil struggle as the Northern Irish or Balkans were and as we haven't seen since 1865. Lord help us then, with our laughably inadequate ADT security systems....

~ Presbyterian Minister with 200 congregants.

In this small focus group of Protestant clergy, 100 percent:

- Agreed that there is currently no threat to local religious venues in Norfolk, Virginia
- Agreed that the federal government should have no role in the monitoring of religious venue security
- Did not have a written emergency response or physical security plan
- Did conduct 100% background investigations on their new employee hires.

This group of clergy clearly desired a strict interpretation of the separation of church and state as it pertained to their religious venues.

While these results are not statistically rigorous, they do provide the reader with an overview of what a small group of religious leaders see as the essential issues surrounding this sensitive topic.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

A good plan violently executed now is better than a perfect plan executed next week.

~ General George S. Patton, U.S. Army

This research resulted in a recommendation for federal involvement and a proposed model of layered security strategy for religious venue security.

A. RECOMMENDED OPTION FOR FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT IN RELIGIOUS VENUE SECURITY

Based on this research, the “Status Quo” option of federal involvement is recommended, but with a modification towards slightly more federal oversight and involvement. With the wording of the High Risk Nonprofit Security Enhancement Act of 2004, and subsequent FY05 and FY06 appropriations for non-profits, the issue of a threat to actual religious venues has been addressed but not highlighted in a way that would bring it to the forefront of the public consciousness, most likely causing significant political and legal controversy. The American public has yet to be confronted with this separation of church and state issue in its religious security context and may continue, possibly unaware of the significant potential for possible attacks upon religious venues in the country. The public would likely not feel a collective need for action until a major attack occurred.

A more enhanced federal effort to support the equipping, education and training of religious organizations would be the most ideal solution to protecting America’s religious underbelly based on its voluntary nature and limited intrusiveness. This method of resourcing appears to be the best approach to fusing voluntary collective security efforts with incentive-based security training and education. The additional \$25M FY06 appropriation is another positive step in the process, but there is still no comprehensive federal method of tracking those homeland security grants as they’re distributed to local non-profits at the State level. Incentives based on more restrictive qualifying requirements would be more contentious, but probably achieve greater unity of effort in the quest for greater overall security in this area.

Still, governmental leaders would have to determine how America, with its limited security resources and competing requirements would tackle prioritization. Ultimately, some other federal program budget will have to be cut or reduced in order to support this initiative.

B. LAYERED SECURITY STRATEGY END-STATE—THE RECOMMENDED MODEL OF RELIGIOUS VENUE SECURITY

What can the federal government to mitigate the aforementioned effects of a successful terrorist attack on a religious venue?—Nothing alone. Led by the federal government, an overall effort among governmental officials and community and religious leaders is the only solution to the goal of optimal religious venue security. Optimal religious security can be achieved through a model of layered defense, including both routine and surge security capabilities.

First, a collaborative religious venue security effort would need to have the following universal objectives:

- Awareness
- Deterrence
- Preparedness

1. Awareness

- Early warning system. Government and religious leaders should pursue a standardized early warning system for religious venues across the country. For example, an automated reverse-911-like telephone notification system already used in many areas of the country could be developed by the federal government to provide just-in-time notification or warning of a religiously motivated act of violence as the news is breaking. While it would be of no practical use at the site of an initial attack, a system such as this might help prevent or mitigate secondary or attempted simultaneous attacks (as in the Al Qaeda method of operation). In the wake of the tsunami tragedy of 2004, for example, world leaders were quick to point out that while no one can predict or prevent a tsunami from happening, an early warning system might mitigate tragedy, even among third world countries. That lesson is also applicable here and an early warning system would

help achieve timely situational awareness among governmental and religious leaders. Increased awareness would result in vigilance then possibly deterrence or even the interdiction of a terrorist attack.

- Education and training. For years, the Jewish community in America (and the world) has been the standard for security training and awareness among its congregations. Similarly, other congregations could be more proactively educated on measures of deterrence, mitigation, and terrorist attack planning, methodologies, and key identifiers to help prevent an attack from occurring at their place of worship. Congregations could utilize federal homeland security grants and be trained on how to identify, defend against, and respond to potential terrorist threats. Terrorism awareness training would be provided to congregations, including security procedures involving lone terrorists, traffic control outside the worship site, and a “zone defense” approach to physical security (outer, middle, and inner) with standard pre-planned procedures to be taken depending on a suspected terrorist’s behavior or physical location⁶¹. Emergency action plan (EAP) reviews could be conducted in a collaborative environment with religious leaders and local police departments. The law enforcement community would assist with EAP development and participate in ongoing consultation as requested.

- Relationship building. Local Law enforcement or religious leaders should host periodic community outreach programs and meetings where law enforcement officials can meet and get to know congregants before an incident occurs, establishing relationships that could either help prevent an attack or improve the response process. This is community policing with religious venues being the target audience, and it would raise the situational awareness of the public to the specific threat of religiously-motivated terrorism, and if nothing else, result in closer ties and a mutually beneficial relationship between religious organizations and local law enforcement.

2. Deterrence

- Improved security systems. All religious venues need to meet minimum security standards, including automatic security system installation (where feasible),

⁶¹ David Brannan & Bruce Hoffman, *Preparing for Suicide Terrorism: A Primer for American Law Enforcement Agencies and Officers* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2004), 22-28.

exterior lighting, security conscious building construction or post-construction counter-measures (eg. aesthetic traffic barriers near the entrance of fixed religious venues.). Religious leaders could take advantage of homeland security grants to receive architectural design consultation for optimum security, including technological security measure planning, access control, etc. (similar to CPTED)

- Visible security presence. All religious venues should have a visible presence of licensed security or police officers during large religious gatherings. Random anti-terrorism measures (RAMs) could be routinely utilized. RAMs are designed to disrupt a terrorist's reconnaissance and attack planning (e.g., changing security patrol schedules, lighting schemes, and the re-positioning of traffic barriers, etc.)

3. Preparedness

- Emergency plans. All religious venues need pre-incident response plans. As the popular quote notes, "Hope is not a strategy." Leaders must have effective plans, train to those plans, and possess the capability to communicate their intent to the masses both pre and post-incident with clarity and (post-incident) calm.

Although New York has deployed Hercules Teams to religious worship sites in the past, based on intelligence "chatter" or a raised homeland security warning level, other triggers could also warrant a surge of local law enforcement or extra security, including:

- Upon visits of religious dignitaries (For example, if the Pope visited New York City, Hercules Teams could be deployed as a deterrent even though the U.S. Secret Service would be the lead federal agency in charge of the visit – layered deterrence)
- Upon the observation of physical reconnaissance by suspect individuals
- For any televised religious events (A televised event would be attractive to Al Qaeda, for example, based on their track record of projecting terror to the masses through imagery.)
- For highly populated religious events (To a terrorist, large crowds of worshipers could result in both a symbolic attack and a high body count)

Both routine and surge security strategies, when combined, provide a method of physical security protection that can meet long-term security needs while "rising to the occasion" to meet an imminent threat.

Worship Watch and Hercules Teams are just two examples of how law enforcement officials around the country are meeting post-9/11 requirements with the most efficient and effective use of their security resources. As shown in both cases, and with the NCATF, all levels of governmental law enforcement can effectively deal directly with private religious organizations in providing a more secure and safe environment in the face of the threat of terrorism.

A two-pronged approach, having a robust routine LE engagement strategy with private religious organizations while simultaneously employing appropriate “surge” plans when necessary, provides a layered defense that would be difficult for an organized terrorist cell to defeat. With the terrorist organization’s history of pre-attack reconnaissance and deliberate planning, even slight changes in defensive postures could prove to be enough deterrence to make a terrorist alter an attack to their disadvantage, delay an attack which would provide U.S. authorities more of an opportunity to interdict an active cell, or, ideally, abort their attack.

Applying routine standard security measures across all major faith venues in America would logically provide increased security. As single engagement strategies, however, neither routine nor surge operations provide adequate protection, but their combined effect becomes a security force-multiplier and, when layered alongside early warning notification, RAMs and an effective emergency action plan, the combined results will be optimal.

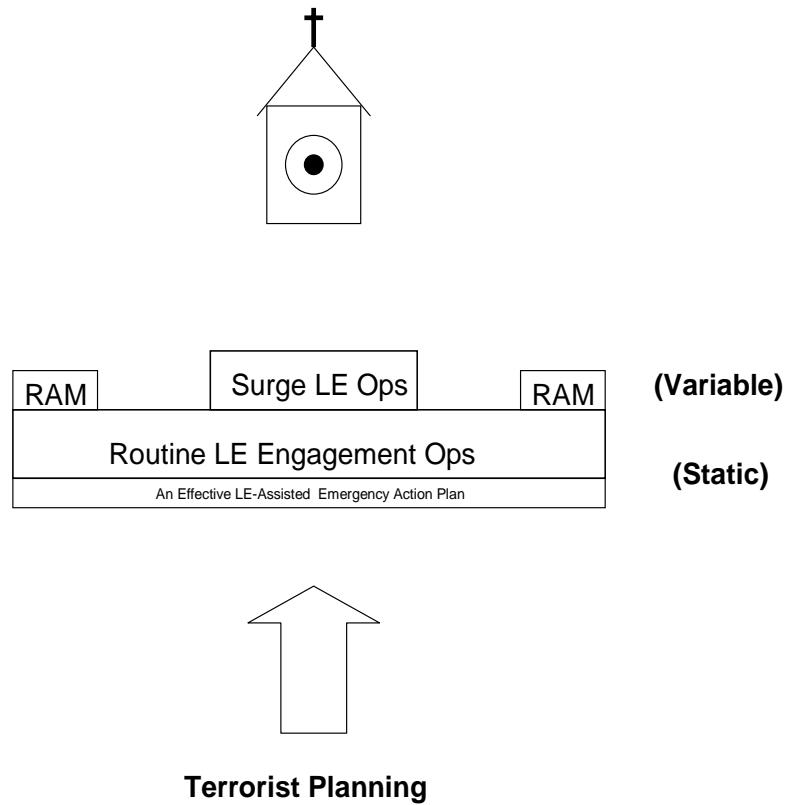


Figure 1. Proposed Security End-State for a religious venue

As shown in Figure 1, routine LE operations and an effective emergency action plan are relatively static, while RAMs and Surge Ops would periodically change or shift to help thwart terrorist planning efforts.

Lastly, HSPD-8, the National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Key Assets, and the list of 15 National Planning Scenarios should be re-evaluated to account for terrorist attacks by individual armed terrorists, suicide bombers, and the inclusion of religious venues as potential targets. Without clearly articulated religious security priorities in overarching federal strategies such as HSPD-8, the requisite attention and funding to improve security will be lacking.

C. CHALLENGES OF THIS MODEL

If government officials pursued a more robust religious security posture, a number of challenges, besides the previously discussed First Amendment concern, would remain:

- What about Muslim Mosques in America? Will Muslims in America get the same security training, and is there a risk that security standards information could subsequently fall into radical Islamic hands within the United States? This can be done, but a system of vetting security requests would have to be developed, along with the designation of a responsible organization within the Department of Homeland Security to execute those duties and responsibilities. Throughout America, there are metropolitan areas with large Muslim populations and numerous, and very active, mosques (e.g., Detroit, Michigan). Given America's democratic governance model, and its policy of non-exclusion and the equal treatment of all major religions, the Muslim faith would most certainly be eligible for the same security training and funding as all other major faiths. With that inclusion exists the risk that federal security standards and policies would be disclosed to the same faith that Al Qaeda claims as its mandate for violence. In the end, however, the risk of training a potential terrorist organization would still exist.
- What about alternative faiths? How would their eligibility be determined? Would non-mainstream and self-proclaimed “religions” such as the Druids or Wiccans be afforded equal treatment, and potentially funding? The potential for constitutional debate is huge. Initially, the concept of only supporting mainstream religions, specifically those that currently qualify for non-profit status by the U.S. government would be the rational choices for religious security training and funding eligibility.
- Are there too many religious venues to adequately protect? Major religious venues should be the highest priority and then religious venues in general should be addressed.
- What would be the standard for security prioritization? A number of factors would be included for prioritizing major religious venues, including:
 - Potential symbolism of the target (very subjective)
 - Media potential—Are services or events televised?
 - Population—The larger the audience, the greater likelihood of a terrorist attack
 - Timing—Religious anniversaries or historic war-on-terror anniversaries which coincide with religious events should be considered
 - Religious venues with dignitaries in attendance
 - Many events could be treated in the same way the U.S. Government treats National Special Security Events, NSSEs today—providing just-in-time and tailored security as needed.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In light of this study, a number of questions are raised which merit further research.

If religious sites or events are not currently covered in America's Homeland Security Strategy, should the method of prioritizing critical sites or events be changed?

Had the terrorists been successful in their efforts to destroy the Vatican, what would have been the impact on America and its foreign policy? What, if any, military options would have been taken, and what would have been the international response? What, if any, is America's role in the protection of religious sites overseas, like the Vatican for example, which has a personal connection to millions of Catholic Americans? Who should be prioritizing religious security concerns—White House or the Department of Homeland Security, and should it be reviewed by an independent organization like the RAND Corporation or the GAO?

What types of assets should be dedicated to the protection of major religious landmarks, and are Americans willing to sacrifice some of their religious freedoms or privileges in the name of higher security?

Lastly, the potential scenario of a terrorist attack on a religious venue in America would be difficult to train against or evaluate without causing significant media attention and public alarm. One option for further training and evaluation would include a closed emergency response tabletop planning exercise scenario utilizing a select group of clergy, constitutional lawyers, and local, state, and federal government participants to completely assess the consequences of a terrorist attack against a religious venue, as well as measures to deter or prevent such an attack from occurring.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Except for 9/11, suicide bombers have conducted their missions abroad. That's going to change, but it's a credit to the patriotism and decency of American Muslims that none of our fellow citizens has strapped on a bomb and walked into a Wal-Mart. Nonetheless, our enemies will find a way to bring their deadly campaign back to our doorsteps. ...We need to prepare for the suicide-bomber blitzkrieg, when murderous zealots come at us in waves.⁶²

~Ralph Peters, author of *New Glory: Expanding America's Global Supremacy*

It's not the size of the first step, it's the direction.

~ Anonymous

The federal government of the United States should make defending all religious venues, especially worship sites and events that might qualify as having “national importance,” a much higher priority. Today, America’s critical infrastructure and historical landmarks are priorities, however, if an attack on a symbol of faith could indeed cause a drastic surge in warfare on a geo-political scale, maybe America should reevaluate its critical vulnerabilities altogether with an eye towards future long-term effects of magnitude vice just the resultant effect of a terrorist attack upon the economy or tourism.

If the terrorists’ modus operandi remains true, they will continue to plan and attack vulnerable (soft) targets, striking at a time and location of their choosing, and only after thorough planning, reconnaissance, and rehearsals. It is this operational process that makes organized terrorism, itself, vulnerable to standardized and innovative LE engagement strategies.

Today, all levels of government should be more involved with religious venue security engagement, and the formulation of adequate policy is desperately needed, however without a dedicated effort to collaborate across civic and religious organizational boundaries, any effort to affect positive homeland security change in this

⁶² Ralph Peters, “Living, and Dying, With Suicide Bombers,” *USA Today*, January 4, 2006, 11.

area will be wasted. Law enforcement agencies and officials throughout America can take the examples of New York City and the State of Virginia, tailor them to their individual jurisdictional needs, and engage with private religious organizations with a strategy that includes both routine and surge procedures. While the terrorists will always have the advantage of timing and location, routine and surge LE strategies, when combined with an effective emergency action plan and RAMs, will enable private religious organizations to achieve optimal security without religious venues becoming unwelcome defensive fortresses that project fear instead of a peaceful setting.

The 9/11 Commission claimed the 2001 terrorist attacks were due, in large part, to a failure of imagination on the part of American officials – their inability to imagine or foresee attacks of that type upon America itself. America is suffering from a similar failure of imagination right now as it pertains to protecting our faith-based “infrastructure” both at home and abroad. America’s religious network of myriad venues is lacking strategic security oversight or even broad direction from the federal government. Subsequently, it is therefore lacking standards and measures of terrorism threat awareness, a deterrent posture, or any preparedness against a terrorist attack.

If America does not take a more proactive stance in religious venue protection and pursue a more proactive federally-led and layered security strategy for religious venues, the result could have strategic consequences.

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